

CONCORD TOWNSHIP BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS
LAKE COUNTY, OHIO
REGULAR MEETING

Concord Town Hall
7229 Ravenna Road
Concord, Ohio 44077

June 12, 2019
7:00 p.m.

TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

Board of Zoning Appeals members present:

Ivan Valentic, Chairman
Francis Sweeney, Vice Chairman
Blair Hamilton, Member
James Rowe, Alternate Member

Also Present:

Michael Lucas, Esq., Legal Counsel
Heather Freeman, Planning & Zoning Director/Zoning
Inspector
Marty Pitkin, Assistant Zoning Inspector

Melton Reporting
11668 Girdled Road
Concord, Ohio 44077
(440) 946-1350

1 7:01 p.m.

2 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Good evening. The Concord
3 Township Board of Zoning Appeals for June 12, 2019, is now in
4 session. I would like to introduce my Board. To my left is
5 Skip Sweeney. I am Ivan Valentic. To my right is Jim Rowe
6 and Blair Hamilton, and to our -- to my far right is Heather
7 Freeman, our Zoning Inspector.

8 Under the advice of counsel, we ask that anybody
9 speaking tonight must be sworn in. If you plan on speaking,
10 please stand at this time. Anyone that plans on speaking,
11 please stand and we will get you sworn in. Okay?

12 (Whereupon, the speakers were sworn en masse.)

13 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: All right. Great. Thank you.
14 Please be seated.

15 Today when presenting your case or commenting, come
16 to the microphone and state your name and address for the
17 record and confirm that you've been sworn in.

18 Heather, were the legal notices published in a
19 timely manner?

20 MS. FREEMAN: Yes.

21 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Great.

22 Tonight we just have -- we have some old business
23 but we have one conditional use permit application. A three-
24 vote majority is required to either approve or deny your
25 application.

26 Old business, we have Appeal Number 2018-41,
27 Mr. Randy Viviani, at 7757 Concord LLC, has asked that that is
28 still on the table, so that has been tabled and we will push
29 that to the next meeting and, hopefully, resolve that.

30 For new business, we have a conditional use permit,

1 2019-12. Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers, Inc., is requesting a
2 conditional use permit to operate an adult group home in
3 accordance with Section 13.16 of the Concord Township zoning
4 for the property located at 7301 Ravenna Road.

5 Please come up and present your case.

6 MR. HAMILTON: Mr. Chairman, if I can, we give them
7 the option. Since we only have a four-member Board, we don't
8 have a full Board seated, that it does take a three-vote
9 majority in order to pass this and you may choose to have this
10 heard at a later time before the whole Board if you want as
11 opposed to just four members.

12 MS. BLASKO: It was my understanding the fifth
13 person recused themselves. So would there ever be a fifth
14 person based on --

15 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Yeah, there could be a fifth,
16 right, Heather?

17 MS. FREEMAN: If the other alternate was available.

18 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Yeah, one of our alternates
19 wasn't available.

20 MR. SWEENEY: Who recused themselves?

21 MR. LUCAS: Which as an aside, too, we did attempt
22 to have the alternate here.

23 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Yes.

24 MR. LUCAS: I know that Heather reached out to try
25 and make sure we had five here and it just didn't work this
26 time.

27 MS. BLASKO: So we were aware of that. We will go
28 ahead.

29 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay.

30 MS. BLASKO: My name is Melanie Blasko, 6251 Cheryl

1 Drive, Concord Township, and I have been sworn in.

2 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: You have been sworn, okay.

3 MS. BLASKO: First, I want to thank you for the
4 opportunity to tell you a little bit about what we'd like to
5 do and tell you a little bit about Lake-Geauga Recovery
6 Centers. We are a private nonprofit corporation and we've
7 been providing continuous service to the community since 1971.
8 We provide services to adults whose lives have been affected
9 by their own or another's use of drugs or alcohol, problem
10 gambling or mental illness.

11 Our mission statement is to promote life on recovery
12 from addiction through education, prevention, and treatment
13 regardless of the ability to pay.

14 We currently have three outpatient offices, one in
15 Painesville, one in Mentor, and one in Chardon. We operate
16 the only long-term nonmedical residential treatment programs
17 in Lake and Geauga Counties. Oak House is our facility for
18 women. Lake House is our facility for men. All of these, of
19 course, are people who are suffering from substance abuse
20 disorder.

21 Those programs are unique in that parents, their
22 children can accompany them to treatment, children ages three
23 and under. There are no such programs, especially for men,
24 between Oregon and Florida where a father can take their
25 toddler to treatment with them. So we're pretty proud of
26 that.

27 Also, we operate in Nevaeh Ridge, which is a program
28 for pregnant women with substance abuse disorder and also will
29 accommodate women who have two children. Our goal in that
30 program is early identification. This disease of addiction is

1 just like any other disease in that early identification, the
2 prognosis is much better. And our goal is to have more drug-
3 free babies born. So we have celebrated the birth our 18th
4 drug-free baby. So we're also pretty proud of that.

5 So that's just a little background and just a very
6 general overview of our services. We are proposing to open a
7 new residential substance abuse treatment facility for adult
8 men at 7301 Painesville-Ravenna Road in Concord.

9 We have been providing residential treatment, well,
10 since 1971 and we have had waiting lists since that time
11 despite 90 to 95 percent occupancy, so the need for this level
12 of care is very well documented.

13 As far as our plan for the proposed use, the 7301
14 was previously used as a nursing home and it's currently
15 vacant. As far as compliance with aspects of the -- aspects
16 in Section 13.16 of the Zoning Resolution, I just wanted to
17 run through those quickly and why we would -- why a
18 conditional use for adult group home would be appropriate.

19 So it is located on a lot that's at least one acre
20 and in a B-2 General Business District.

21 The signage will conform for provisions for a B-2
22 General Business District. Typically, signs for our
23 facilities are very modest and unassuming, yet very
24 professional and tasteful. I did include a copy of a sample
25 of one of our signs for residential treatment. It's the last
26 page of your packet.

27 The exterior appearance of a single-family home will
28 be maintained very much exactly how the house looks right now.

29 Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers programs and services
30 and locations are all licensed by the Ohio Department of

1 Mental Health and Addiction Services and we are nationally
2 accredited through the Commission on Accreditation of
3 Rehabilitation Facilities. Licensing by these entities
4 ensures compliance to comprehensive state and federal
5 standards, as well as commitment to excellence, and will
6 ensure compliance to building code requirements, fire code
7 requirements. All those things are rigorously checked when we
8 have our review by the state and by the national
9 accreditation.

10 All of our locations from outpatient to
11 residential -- The other level of care which I did not mention
12 are recovery houses. These are for individuals after they
13 complete primary treatment. Perhaps going home maybe isn't
14 the best place for them to support their recovery, so the
15 recovery houses are for men or women. The way ours are
16 designed, there are five adults and a house manager who lives
17 on site with them. Those are also licensed by the State of
18 Ohio. So all of our locations and services are licensed.

19 Off-street parking: Off-street parking areas are
20 provided in accordance with Section 29 of the Concord Township
21 Zoning Resolution. Traffic access and internal traffic
22 circulation are appropriate based on the projected number of
23 staff and visitors. The vast majority of residents in this
24 proposed facility will not have cars. This will be for 16 men
25 and they -- The people that drive are the staff. So they
26 don't come with cars. When they're there for treatment, they
27 have a very structured day and they are there the whole time.
28 The facilities are staffed 24/7. So we have two counselors
29 that would primarily work days and then we would have program
30 assistants, we call them program assistants who monitor the

1 residents. And so they're there, you know, around the clock,
2 weekends included. There are not many visitors. So as far as
3 parking goes, you have to be there a certain length of time in
4 order to have visitation by your family.

5 Refuse area enclosed and will be maintained, as will
6 current landscaping.

7 Safety inspections: Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers
8 will have annual fire inspection completed by an outside
9 authority, such as Concord Township Fire Department, as well
10 as obtain an occupancy permit prior to occupancy, as required
11 for licensure through Ohio Department of Mental Health and
12 Addiction Services and the Commission on Accreditation of
13 Rehabilitation Facilities and in compliance with the Zoning
14 Resolution. Copies of these can be provided or posted in the
15 facility.

16 These are all things that we're required to do in order to be
17 licensed and to maintain our licensure.

18 In addition, the proposed use is generally
19 compatible with other properties in the B-2 District, the Town
20 Hall Commons, and the R-1 surrounding areas.

21 The adjacent properties would not be adversely
22 affected, including any issues related to noise, glare, fumes,
23 vibration or odor.

24 The economic impact would basically be job creation.
25 So we estimate the creation of five full-time and three part-
26 time positions, with an average annual payroll of \$315,384.
27 That would include our current administrative staff. We are
28 fortunate to have this allocated to this facility as well.

29 And the proposed conditional use, being that is
30 quite similar to the property's previous use of the nursing

1 home, is neutral in its relationship to the Concord Township
2 Comprehensive Plan.

3 One of the things that is always troubling to me --
4 I am the president and CEO but also personally -- the waiting
5 lists. If you have a family member or a loved one, a mother,
6 a father or spouse who has lived with this in their family for
7 a long time and then your loved one finally agrees they're
8 ready to accept help, they're ready to go to treatment, and
9 you say, "Great. You called the right place. I am glad you
10 called us but now you have to wait." And I can't think of
11 anything more heart wrenching as a parent than to hear that on
12 the other end of the phone.

13 We always try to provide outpatient services for
14 those people who are on the waiting list for residential
15 treatment and sometimes that works and sometimes it works
16 well, other times the reason they're being recommended for
17 residential is because they need that level of care. They
18 most likely failed at a lower level.

19 So our goal in expanding services is to increase
20 access and, hopefully, if not reduce, hopefully, just
21 eliminate a waiting list for services. Right now, I think the
22 statistic is 11 percent of people who have a substance abuse
23 disorder actually seek treatment. And there, there would be a
24 rise if that was heart disease and we are saying that was a
25 statistic for heart disease. So we are looking to really have
26 an impact on that.

27 Does anybody have any questions?

28 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: I will start. In regards to the
29 fire code and building code, it was a nursing home. In your
30 review or your potential purchase of the building, are you

1 anticipating much of an upgrade needed and required, you know,
2 for when the Fire Department comes in to inspect it? Do you
3 know what you guys have going forward with that?

4 MS. BLASKO: The only thing that we will look to do
5 is the garage, which is just kind of a garage right now, we
6 would like to convert into counselors' offices.

7 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay. So that would require a
8 lot of upgrades but the rest of the facility --

9 MS. BLASKO: Actually, there is heating, electric,
10 plumbing there.

11 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay.

12 MS. BLASKO: So it's not as much as you think.

13 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay.

14 MS. BLASKO: And there's a sprinkler system. Oh,
15 that is in the, in the facility itself, there is sprinklers.

16 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay, yeah.

17 MR. HAMILTON: That's what I was going to ask.

18 MS. BLASKO: Yeah, there are.

19 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay. So the -- okay. The
20 staff, just really quick, how many parking spaces do you think
21 daily people will be parking here? Is it three to five or is
22 it, you know, a little bit more than that?

23 MS. BLASKO: Well, typically, there's two counselors
24 and sometimes, like, the supervisor will come in and visit. I
25 would say no more than five.

26 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay.

27 MS. BLASKO: We have other support staff. We have
28 peer recovery supports. Again, they're kind of in and out
29 providing services -- or a case manager -- so they're not
30 there all day but they might be in and out. So I would say no

1 more than five.

2 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay. All right. I don't have
3 anything else. Thank you for going through that list and
4 talking through each one of those.

5 MS. BLASKO: Okay.

6 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: That makes our job a little bit
7 easier.

8 Skip, do you have any questions?

9 MR. SWEENEY: No questions.

10 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Guys, anything?

11 MR. HAMILTON: I do not.

12 MR. ROWE: No.

13 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Wow, these guys don't have
14 questions. All right. That's impressive.

15 All right. Is there anyone else here that's
16 speaking, that would like to speak for or against?

17 MR. CARSON: I am speaking for. My name is Van
18 Carson. I am the chairman of the board of Lake-Geauga
19 Recovery Centers. I have been on the board since 2011.

20 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: And you've been sworn?

21 MR. CARSON: I've been the chairman since I retired.

22 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: And you've been sworn in, sir?

23 MR. CARSON: Yes, I stood and was sworn in when
24 you --

25 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: All right. And can you state
26 your name and address for the record, please?

27 MR. CARSON: My name is Van Carson and my address is
28 9185 Woods Way Drive, Kirtland, Ohio.

29 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: All right.

30 MR. CARSON: And I am chairman of the board of Lake-

1 Geauga Recovery Centers.

2 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Thank you, sir.

3 MR. CARSON: Make sure the record is complete. I
4 guess I am a little out of practice. I have 50 years of trial
5 practice. I stand up and start talking now without making the
6 record complete.

7 I simply wanted to add, if there are any questions,
8 obviously, I would be willing to answer them. But having done
9 zoning work for my clients when I was with Squire, Sanders &
10 Dempsey for 50 years, I thought I would address a couple of
11 the questions that we often had. One is, are we financially
12 sound? And we are. We can afford this property and we can
13 afford to take care of it and to maintain it and do that in a
14 quality way.

15 We have enough properties now that we have a
16 facilities manager. He doesn't have an unlimited budget,
17 nobody does, but he has an adequate budget both to take care
18 of the facilities but also landscaping and things like that.
19 We're proud to have our facilities look good because we want
20 to be a good neighbor. We want people to say, "We'd like to
21 have you in the neighborhood."

22 And we have our treasurer here with us, you know, if
23 there are any questions about the finances. He is a member of
24 the board and -- But we are, we are very sound financially.
25 We can afford this property and we can afford to maintain it
26 and we will do so.

27 Our staff are very good and I am proud to be part of
28 this organization. I started out an interest in this because
29 I was on an executive committee of the Ohio Chamber of
30 Commerce and we were looking at, how do we handle the opiate

1 crisis? How do we control costs? How do we make sure that
2 babies aren't born addicted? Those were the kinds of
3 questions that we were asking. So I stepped up and served on
4 a number of the committees at the time that the chamber had.
5 We were looking at it from the perspective of, what's most
6 cost effective? And I became a believer that this is a good
7 system.

8 The only thing that I would add is these facilities
9 are well run. They are safe places. And I say that sincerely
10 because I have a daughter who has just gone through treatment
11 at Lake-Geauga Recovery Centers and I certainly wouldn't have
12 sent her there if I didn't believe that it was the right thing
13 to do.

14 I have nothing else to add.

15 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: All right. Thank you, sir.

16 MR. CARSON: Do you have any questions of me?

17 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Any questions from the Board?

18 MR. ROWE: No.

19 MR. SWEENEY: No, thank you.

20 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: No, thank you.

21 Is there anyone else that would like to come up to
22 speak for or against this conditional use permit? Okay. If
23 there's no further questions, the public hearing for
24 Application Number -- Conditional Use Permit Number 2019-13 is
25 now closed to the public.

26 I would like to entertain a motion to approve the
27 Conditional Use Permit 2019-13.

28 MR. ROWE: So moved.

29 MR. SWEENEY: So moved.

30 MR. HAMILTON: Second.

1 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: All right. Thank you. The
2 approval is moved and seconded. Discussion for the Board.
3 Anyone want to say anything, any thoughts? No? All good?

4 MR. HAMILTON: It's a good use for the existing
5 facility. I think they have done a good job of presenting the
6 reason for the conditional use. I am in agreement.

7 MR. SWEENEY: A much needed service.

8 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay.

9 MR. SWEENEY: Much needed.

10 MR. ROWE: A great presentation. So, I mean, how do
11 you come up with questions?

12 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay. They did a good job
13 talking through all the conditions in 13.16 and kind of how
14 they meet all those. And they're getting that a little bit of
15 the facility up to speed, what they need to if they're going
16 to use that garage as well. It was well done.

17 So the question is on approval of Conditional Use
18 Permit Number 2019-13. A yes vote is for the approval. A no
19 vote denies it.

20 Heather, please call the vote.

21 (The power briefly flashed off.)

22 MR. LUCAS: I hope that wasn't an omen.

23 MS. FREEMAN: Mr. Rowe?

24 MR. ROWE: Yes.

25 MS. FREEMAN: Mr. Sweeney?

26 MR. SWEENEY: Yes.

27 MS. FREEMAN: Mr. Hamilton?

28 MR. HAMILTON: Yes.

29 MS. FREEMAN: And Mr. Valentic?

30 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Yes.

1 The ayes have it. Your conditional use, conditional
2 use permit has been approved. Congratulations. Thank you.

3 MS. BLASKO: Thank you.

4 MR. CARSON: Thank you.

5 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: And good luck.

6 MR. SWEENEY: Good luck.

7 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Okay. Next on the agenda is
8 approval of minutes. There is three of us here, so I think we
9 can do the minutes.

10 MR. SWEENEY: Did we have a May meeting? Did we
11 have a May -- We didn't have a May meeting.

12 MR. HAMILTON: No.

13 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Yeah. This is for the approval
14 of the minutes from April 10th.

15 MR. SWEENEY: Right.

16 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Skip, you were there. Blair,
17 you were there. Of course, I was there, too. Is there a
18 motion to approve the minutes?

19 MR. HAMILTON: So moved.

20 MR. SWEENEY: Seconded.

21 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: Is there any deletions or
22 revisions?

23 MR. HAMILTON: No.

24 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: No, good. A yes vote approves
25 the minutes. A no vote denies them. All in favor of
26 approving the minutes as written say "yes."

27 (Three aye votes, no nay votes, one abstention.)

28 CHAIRMAN VALENTIC: The minutes have been approved
29 as written.

30 Okay. Our next meeting will be on July 10, 2019.

1 Hopefully, Mr. Viviani will be back for that meeting. If not,
2 the saga will continue it.

3 The Concord Township Board of Zoning Appeals meeting
4 for June is now closed. Thank you.

5 (Whereupon, the meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.)

6

7

8

9

10

11

12

13

14

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25

26

27

28

29

30

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30

STATE OF OHIO)
)
COUNTY OF CUYAHOGA)

CERTIFICATE

I, Melinda A. Melton, Registered Professional Reporter, a notary public within and for the State of Ohio, duly commissioned and qualified, do hereby certify that, to the best of my ability, the foregoing proceedings were reduced by me to stenotype shorthand, subsequently transcribed into typewritten manuscript; and that the foregoing is a true and accurate transcript of said proceedings so taken as aforesaid.

I do further certify that this proceeding took place at the time and place as specified in the foregoing caption and was completed without adjournment.

I do further certify that I am not a friend, relative, or counsel for any party or otherwise interested in the outcome of these proceedings.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal of office this 27th day of June 2019.

Melinda A. Melton
Registered Professional Reporter

Notary Public within and for the
State of Ohio

My Commission Expires:
February 4, 2023